

REMARKS

This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action dated May 28, 2008. Claims 1 to 5, 7, 8, 10 and 12 to 19 are pending in the application, with Claim 19 having been newly added, and with Claim 6 having been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer of subject matter and without conceding the correctness of the rejection applied against it. Claims 1 and 16 to 18 are the independent claims. Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

The Office Action asserts that the phrase "computer-readable medium" in Claims 17 and 18 is being construed as the ROM or storage medium on page 51 of the specification, and is being limited to statutory media. While Applicant agrees that "computer-readable medium" may be limited to statutory media, Applicant respectfully submits that such interpretation should include the computer-readable media listed in the specification and any equivalents thereof.

Claims 1 to 5, 7, 8, 10, 12, 13 and 15 to 18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 5,911,139 (Jain) in view of U.S. Publication No. 2002/0106135 (Iwane) and U.S. Patent 6,961,463 (Loui). Claims 6 and 14 were rejected under § 103(a) over Jain, Iwane and Loui in view of U.S. Patent No. 7,010,144 (Davis). Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections are respectfully requested.

The present invention generally concerns selectively storing an input image in a database. First search information associated with an input image is acquired on the basis of information input by a user, and feature data contained in the input image is acquired as second search information. In addition, the invention attempts to detect pointer

information from the input image indicating a storage location of an original data file in the database.

According to one aspect of the invention, the original data file is searched for using the pointer information in a case that the pointer information is detected, and the original data file is searched for using the first and second search information in a case that the pointer information is not detected.

By virtue of this arrangement, it is ordinarily possible to quickly and efficiently locate an original data file if an input image includes pointer information, while providing a more thorough search using the first and second information if the input image does not include pointer information.

Referring specifically to claim language, independent Claim 1 is directed to an image processing method implemented by a computer for selectively storing an input image in a database. The method includes (a) acquiring first search information associated with the input image on the basis of information input by a user, (b) acquiring feature data contained in the input image as second search information, and attempting to detect pointer information from the input image indicating a storage location of an original data file in the database, (c) searching for the original data file corresponding to the input image in the database by using the pointer information in a case that the pointer information is detected in step (b), and searching for the original data file using the first and second search information in a case that the pointer information is not detected in step (b), (d) converting the input image into outline data and storing the outline data in the database, in a case where the original data file corresponding to the input image is not found in step (c), and (e) declining to store the input image data into the database, in a case that the original data

file corresponding to the input image is found in step (c). The outline data indicates a visual representation of a tracing of the outline of a character or a graphic object.

Independent Claims 16, 17 and 18 are directed to a system, a program, and a computer-readable medium, respectively, substantially in accordance with the method of Claim 1.

The applied art is not seen to disclose or suggest the features of the present invention, and in particular is not seen to disclose or suggest at least the features of searching for an original data file using pointer information in a case that the pointer information is detected from an input image, and searching for the original data file using first search information based on user input and second search information of feature data in the input image in a case that the pointer information is not detected in the input image.

In connection with its rejection of now-cancelled Claim 6, page 13 of the Office Action concedes that Jain, Iwane, and Loui fail to disclose second search information including information associated with a storage location of an original data file which is extracted on the basis of pointer information in the input image. Applicants agree, and submit that it logically follows that Jain, Iwane and Loui also cannot disclose searching for an original data file using pointer information in a case that the pointer information is detected from an input image, and searching for the original data file using first search information based on user input and second search information of feature data in the input image in a case that the pointer information is not detected in the input image.

Nevertheless, the Office Action asserts that Davis (Column 9, lines 1 to 16) discloses information associated with a storage location of an original data file which is extracted on the basis of pointer information in an input image.

However, the cited portions of Davis simply disclose that a pointer can be embedded in a watermark added to a digital image. See Davis, Column 9, lines 1 to 16. Davis is not seen to disclose performing different searches based on whether or not a pointer is detected, much less searching for an original data file using pointer information in a case that the pointer information is detected from an input image, and searching for the original data file using first search information based on user input and second search information of feature data in the input image in a case that the pointer information is not detected in the input image.

Therefore, independent Claims 1, 16, 17 and 18 are believed to be in condition for allowance, and such action is respectfully requested.

The other claims in the application are each dependent from the independent claims discussed above and are therefore believed to be allowable over the applied references for at least the same reasons. Because each dependent claim is deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, however, the individual consideration of each on its own merits is respectfully requested.

No other matters being raised, it is believed that the entire application is fully in condition for allowance, and such action is courteously solicited.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Costa Mesa, California office at (714) 540-8700. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

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